Global City Indicators Facility

Cities will play a key role in confronting the challenges of an increasingly ageing population, says new policy report by the Global City Indicators Facility at the University of Toronto and Philips in the Netherlands

TORONTO, ON — By 2050, for the first time in history, there will be more people in the world over age 65 than under age 14. The **Global City Indicators Facility (GCIF)** in Toronto, has partnered with **Philips** in The Netherlands, to release a new report on *Cities and Ageing*. This policy snapshot outlines strategies for addressing the needs of our ageing urban population, and shows how internationally standardized indicators of "age-friendly cities" can be used to benchmark and predict scenarios for better-informed decision-making. The report, and GCIF's ongoing research, will inform and guide city leaders on how to better confront the challenges associated with an ageing population.

Globally, people over the age of 65 will increase by 183 percent by 2050. In parts of Africa, the increase is a startling 366 percent. At the same time, urbanization has become a defining phenomenon of the 21st century, and it is projected that 70 percent of the world's population will live in cities. Given these two critical population shifts, this rapidly ageing world signifies rapidly ageing cities.

Municipal policy decisions are becoming increasingly vital to the state of the world's ageing population — and their success will have far-reaching effects on the global economy. "Our *Cities and Ageing* Report develops a framework for what we term *Age Friendly City Policy, Planning and Design*," says **Patricia McCarney, Director of the GCIF and the Global Cities Institute**, a new research centre at the University of Toronto's John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design.

The growing number of people over 65 has vast implications for how we design and plan our cities: consideration must be given to the availability of health services and care facilities, residential and street design must incorporate mobility needs, and thought must go into community access to commercial services and technology. "Urban design models that integrate seniors into walkable, mixed-use areas are the hallmarks of a healthy city," says Professor McCarney.

But of course municipalities aren't the only levels of government whose policies play a role in the health and well being of ageing citizens. In many countries, for example, provincial or state governments are responsible for healthcare, while pensions and immigration are administered at the national level.

"Policy and funding silos can frustrate real solutions," says Professor McCarney. "A national strategy that funnels resources into cities to address issues associated with their ageing populations is fundamental in moving forward if sustainable prosperity nationally and globally is our goal."

According to Global Cities Institute Senior Fellow, **Dr. Gora Mboup, who leads the Global Urban Observatory at UN Habitat in Nairobi**, "The global urban agenda is just coming to terms with this ageing phenomenon. The new GCIF-Philips Report is timely and insightful and positions cities and ageing as a core component of the global agenda."

As the population ages, the ratio of the retired population to the working-age population will increase — meaning there will be fewer people in the workforce able to support non-working people such as the elderly and children. With cities now responsible for more than 70 percent of global GDP, failing to account for an increasing number of senior citizens living in cities will have a negative impact on a nation's path to sustainable prosperity.

"The *Cities and Ageing* policy snapshot is a rich source of insights and recommendations to the policy debates taking place on energy and climate change, as well as future healthcare systems and budgets," says **Harry Verhaar, Head of Global Public & Governmental Affairs of Philips Lighting.** "This underlines the need for new solutions and service delivery models, for example, intelligent LED street lighting for improved safety and comfort, and modern healthcare solutions such as home healthcare and remote health monitoring to stimulate people to stay active and healthy while reducing the number of costly hospital visits."

Launched in 2009, GCIF developed standardized metrics to ensure sound global comparison across cities, making globally comparative research, learning, and exchange possible. GCIF work allows cities to accurately compare data, differentiate performance, and share knowledge on best practices across a variety issues. The Facility now hosts a network of over 250 participating cities across 80 countries.

The policy snapshot on Cities and Ageing is the second in a series of policy reports that GCIF will release on urban issues in the coming years. Forthcoming reports will address mobility and sustainable infrastructure.

The GCIF Policy Snapshot on Cities and Ageing is available to download at:
www.cityindicators.org and www.globalcitiesinstitute.org

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